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FACTS ABOUT GRAND ISLAND FARMSTEADS

Department of Agriculture
Farm Security Administration

OFFICIAL NAME: Grand Island Farmsteads

LOCATION: In Hall County, south central Nebraska, 5 miles southeast of Grand Island and approximately 154 miles west of Omaha.

HISTORY OF PROJECT: Started by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in October, 1934, through the Nebraska Rehabilitation Corporation. Transferred to the Resettlement Administration, October 1, 1935.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT: To provide ten subsistence homesteads for low-income families formerly on relief rolls. Through intensive cultivation of their 7 acre individual tracts, these families will try to produce subsistence crops and a salable surplus for cash income.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project is an agricultural community type, having a tract of 159 acres. In addition to their individual tracts, homesteaders engage in intensive truck farming on a community farm of 80 acres. On the cooperatively managed community farm homesteaders cultivate sugar beets, grain, sorghum, oats, sweet clover, corn, potatoes, and alfalfa. They also raise livestock. On their individual farms, they raise onions, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage and general farm produce. Each family also keeps 2 cows, 100 hens and 300 chicks.

A small cannery for the processing of surplus vegetables has been constructed. A community-owned irrigation system and necessary roads have also been built.

HOUSE DESCRIPTION: Houses are 4-room, frame buildings without basement or attic. Each house contains a kitchen, living room and 2 bedrooms. Electric power is furnished by a private utility and water is obtained from individual wells equipped with hand pumps. Outside sanitary facilities have been built.

HOMESTEADERS: All the homesteaders on the project were born in Nebraska with the exception of two men and two women. Their ages range from 25 years to 48. All had general farming experience before application and some had a versatile background as rural school teachers, mechanics or office workers. Others had previous experience as shipping clerks, plumbers or laborers. The average income of these families previous to application was $429. Of eight families studied, 7

families had received some kind of relief before they were accepted on the project. Nine of the husbands and wives had high school education and seven finished elementary school. There are 23 children on the project, the majority of them in their early teens or younger.